

# THE ARCHITECTS NEWSPAPER

## 01\_02.09.2011

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A SUSTAINABLE BUILDING FOR GROWING SOUTH LOOP SCHOOL



COURTESY PERKINS + WILL

## KEEPING UP WITH JONES HS

Recent census figures show a rapidly growing population in Chicago's South Loop. The burgeoning neighborhood will soon boast an architecturally ambitious new building for Williams Jones College Preparatory High School, one that replaces the existing concrete building on South State Street. Designed by Ralph Johnson of Perkins + Will, the project features a bold red, gray, and white modulated façade, breaking up the massing of the eight-story building.

In addition to classrooms and science labs, the 1200-student facility will include a college resource center, a large gym with a weight room, a six-lane pool, visual and performing arts studios, underground staff parking, and a professional quality auditorium with a scene shop, dressing and green rooms. The current Jones building accommodates approximately 850 students.

To get the job Perkins + Will responded to an RFQ, beating 27 other firms who submitted. "The submissions were evaluated by a team of Chicago Public Schools and Public Building **continued on page 5**

DESIGN COMMUNITY RALLIES ROUND GOLDBERG'S THREATENED PRENTICE TOWER



COURTESY LANDMARKS ILLINOIS

## NOT SO FAST

Apart from stints at Harvard, the Bauhaus, and a few years in the office of Mies van der Rohe, Bertrand Goldberg

was a Chicagoan all the way. Whether or not the city will return the architect's dedication remains to be seen.

Goldberg, who died in 1997, designed over a dozen buildings in a career spanning four **continued on page 7**

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750 ACRES OF PARK REDEEMED



COURTESY CHICAGO PARK DISTRICT

## Toxic to Trails

Many American cities have swaths of land set aside for industries that once represented the town's production power. But as industries become obsolete and others move abroad, **continued on page 2**



COURTESY CDOT

LAWRENCE AVENUE TO GET A TRIM

## SLIM FAST

Crossing the street in Chicago is about to get a little easier. The Chicago Department of Transportation (CDOT) plans to start trimming the excess off four-lane Lawrence Avenue on the North Side. It will be the first busy thoroughfare to be altered as a result of a complete streets policy adopted in 2007, in favor of a more balanced approach to road design that considers pedestrians, cyclists, transit riders, as well as drivers.

**continued on page 4**



FERTILE DESIGNS AT AIC.  
SEE PAGE 13

COURTESY AIC

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CULTURAL TOURISM

Ruins fascinate. They hold a special place in our imagination that cuts across time and culture. Designers from Piranesi to picturesque landscape architects have capitalized on them to great effect.

Last month, following an article in the arts magazine *Guernica*, a debate flared up online about the ethics and implications of so-called ‘ruin porn,’ that is, photographs taken in Detroit of derelict sites. John Patrick Leary argues that the city’s abandoned buildings function as something much deeper than decaying beauties. They allow Americans to access, and indulge, our apocalyptic anxieties, to imagine that we have seen and survived The End. This would explain their particular resonance in our present age of heightened economic and environmental worry. However, many Detroit-based writers, including Leary, express frustration and even anger at the continuous depictions of decay, and by implication, despair. Their argument that estheticizing these places depersonalizes the human realities behind the ruins is one that should not be dismissed.

This debate reflects an internal dialogue we have in preparation of nearly every issue of *AN*’s Midwest edition. We have published projects by architects who are reworking abandoned buildings and a review of the book and exhibition *Detroit Disassembled*; we have tracked changing land-use policy, the new faces of policy makers, and, in this issue, a preservation battle to save a significant school building (page 4). The basic question we ask when considering a topic is simple: Is this story news or are we merely indulging the fascination with urban decay?

What much of the “ruin porn” debate seems to miss is that the explosion of interest in images of Detroit has created something of value for the beleaguered city: its great ruins have become a cultural magnet. The Michigan Central Station is the city’s Colosseum, drawing visitors from around the world. In this fascination lies an opportunity.

Our current issue also includes a call for greater political engagement by architects at all levels of government (page 15). Here is a perfect example of where the voices and ideas of architects could prove decisive. The best of these buildings—even in their haunting, hollowed out forms—should be reconceived as assets rather than cleared away. Some could be mothballed for further use, but some, like Michigan Central, are, in their ruined state, monuments telling a profoundly complex and rich story. These could become sites for interpretation, for forward thought about shrinking cities, with limited access for tours and events. As Detroit struggles to recover from the trauma of its fifty years of near freefall, turning ruin porn into richer sites and experiences, shaped by Detroiters not just by visiting photographers and urban explorers, could provide a framework for how to move forward. Cultural tourism has turned around many a declining community. And while it certainly won’t fix all of Detroit’s problems, it could be a start. And something to build on. **ALAN G. BRAKE**

**TOXIC TO TRAILS** continued from front page

more cities have had to contend with rotting industrial infrastructure. While some communities struggle to turn these eyesores into parks, Chicagoans have come up with a unique way, economically and ecologically, to cope. On the far Southeast Side, the Department of Housing and Economic Development’s Open Space Division has been compiling a portfolio of land parcels totaling more than 750 acres, all of which will be transferred to the Chicago Park District.

What makes the project so unique is that the land, most of it surrounding Lake Calumet, is not intended for recreation but for preservation, with an eye toward global warming. The city land is part of the Calumet Open Space Reserve Plan, an initiative that includes 3,500 acres of private, public, and commercial land. One thousand acres could revert back to industrial use, but all parties will seek to preserve natural habitats for wildlife. Much of the land was manipulated and polluted over the course of the past hundred years. Simply returning land to nature could secure its future. “Let’s just say, it’s not virgin,” said Kathy Dickhut. Dickhut has been compiling parcels for the Department of Housing. “There’s bad stuff out there, but it’s not the worst I’ve seen. And there are some areas that are in very good shape.”

It wasn’t until the city planned to plop yet another airport atop the land in the 1970s that a cry went up. Now that the city owns over 750 acres, it falls to the Department of Environment to determine what is possible. This requires understanding of the vast area’s history. Aaron Durnbaugh, a deputy commissioner at the Department of Environment, said every site is unique. For instance, a parcel of land near Heron Pond has been used by a gun club for more than a century, which meant gun enthusiasts have been shooting lead into the ground.

While the challenges of cleaning up the land may prove difficult, finding the funding to maintain it will require creative thinking. “There is no city budget line out there that can take this some place,” Durnbaugh said. Instead, the city must work with the state and the federal governments to bring change. For Indian Ridge Marsh, which runs like a spine through the middle of the site, the Army Corps of Engineers has allocated \$2 million to clean dumped dredge spoils that they have placed there over the years. In total, the Army Corps will spend about \$5 million on the clean up. The USDA allocated nearly \$200,000 to study how phytoremediation, using plants to soak up toxins, can help with water control at Big Marsh. And another \$400,000 was put up by the EPA though the Great Lakes Restoration Project to prevent contaminated waters from running off-site and degrading adjacent wetlands.

If 750 acres sounds like a lot, it’s only part of the Chicago Park District’s 7,600 acres. Gia Biagi, director of planning and development for the Park District, said that eventually, the public will be able to use the area through passive activities like hiking and birdwatching. “Hegewisch Marsh is the most accessible right now,” she said, “but there’s a connective tissue that will ultimately connect to bikeways and trails.”

**TOM STOELKER**

LETTERS

**WASTING ENERGY ON A SMART GRID?**

I was excited to read *The Architect’s Newspaper’s* optimistic feature on smart grid technologies by Ann Lok Lui (“Smart Grid City” *AN*08\_12.15.2010). The benefit of incorporating such technologies into our existing building stock to provide more reliable and sustainable energy sources is certainly something architects would do well to pay attention to. However, I was disappointed that the article failed to address a more pressing concern (and potential) for architects: the amount of energy used and

abused in buildings.

Beyond securing more reliable, renewable, and cheaper energy supplies lies the need to ensure that our buildings are less energy hungry. This includes providing the ability for and assessing the effectiveness of how building occupants use their buildings to reduce unnecessary energy consumption. Shouldn’t architects go to greater lengths to evaluate the in-use effectiveness of their designs, including suggesting ways for building users to achieve greater efficiencies and cost-savings? Let’s stop washing our

hands of this post-occupancy responsibility, while simultaneously reaching for the promise of new energy-providing technologies, however sustainable its spin.

KIRK WOOLLER  
DIRECTOR  
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## KUCHEN AT THE COOP?

When Eavesdrop first learned that the Seminary Coop Bookstore would be relocated—gasp!—above ground, our heart sank. No more hunched-over browsing. No more precariously low clearances (Eavesdrop is really tall!). Won't all that sunlight fade the covers? The new space is in good hands though, with the firm **Tigerman McCurry** overseeing the design. The building itself, designed in the 1950's by Holabird & Root, abuts Wright's Robie House. If you're embracing natural light and sharing the block with an architectural icon, you might as well throw in a top-notch café. Eavesdrop heard that a little Austrian fellow named **Julius Meini** might run the café space. Soon UC students may be rolling over straight from class in their PJs and sandals (with socks, no doubt) to nosh on tiny biscuits, dark, dark coffee, and soft-boiled eggs.

## CITYSCAPES OR BURBSCAPES!?!

Regular readers can probably guess that Eavesdrop is a devoted urbanite—better for party going and gossip collecting—as well as an avid reader of architectural criticism. **Blair Kamin's** contribution to architectural dialogue in Chicago is important and undeniable. So you might understand our shock upon learning that Blair lives (allegedly) in the 'burbs! Why flee to turf beyond the L? His office must be in the Tribune Tower. So is it the good ol' I-ain't-sending-my-kids-to-Chicago Public Schools dilemma? Let this be a challenge: as soon as those rug rats graduate, we want to see you downtown. Or at least in Ravenswood or something.

SEND EAMES CHAIRS AND TRUTH-OR-DARES TO [MIDWESTEAVESDROP@ARCHPAPER.COM](mailto:MIDWESTEAVESDROP@ARCHPAPER.COM).



COURTESY MVVA

WITH REDESIGN, ST. LOUIS ARCH GROUNDS COME INTO FOCUS

## CONNECT THE ARCH

Since besting a star-studded field of competitors last September, Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates has refined their winning proposal to redesign Eero Saarinen and Dan Kiley's St. Louis Arch Grounds. A new concept plan revealed on January 26 calls for increased connectivity between key components of the design.

The revised plan extends an east to west entry procession to connect downtown St. Louis with the Arch grounds and dramatically expands the Smith Plaza at the foot of the Gateway Mall by closing three blocks of Memorial Drive and capping a trench enclosing Interstate 70. "It turned out to be the core of the undertaking," said Tom Bradley, superintendent of the Jefferson National Expansion Memorial. "It's a little nucleus that refocuses the entry from the north garage west to the Gateway Mall."

The plan calls for the removal of the parking garage north of the Arch and also scraps plans for underground parking, proposing that visitors rely on currently underutilized downtown parking.

Bradley said that because the Arch is a national memorial demanding a reverential atmosphere, space for more active uses like a beer garden will be pushed into the city.

Farther west, a depressed Keiner Plaza along the Gateway Mall will be raised to street level, reconceived as an extension of the adjacent City Garden sculpture park, complete with fountains, a carousel, and an ice-skating rink.

The National Parks Service has authority to acquire 100 acres for the parkland in East St. Louis, but plans may lag behind the rest of the project as completion is dependent on road construction.

Surrounded by railroads and highways, the east park presents distinct connectivity challenges. "We know it's a problem. We haven't gotten there yet," said Bradley. "If we can get people there, things will happen." A glass-bottom gondola traversing the Mississippi River has been proposed as a revenue generating attraction allowing easier access.

Even with funding still uncertain, the renovation's price tag has ballooned to \$578 million, a number that's still likely to increase. Bradley admitted that public funding is hard to come by in post-stimulus times, but said there's been a healthy interest from the private sector. "You can't just take five years off and wait for the economy. We're trying to keep this thing going." While plans will evolve as a final master plan is prepared this year, the concept plan helps make the project real to the city and potential investors. Officials still hope for a 2015 completion.

**BRANDEN KLAYKO**

### > THE FINE LINE

503 North Wells Street  
Chicago  
Tel: 312-670-0300  
Designers: Kim Preis  
and Lucy Minturn



CHRIS STRONG

Kim Preis' 20-year-old business, The Fine Line, is nothing short of a tile studio, a tightly curated and well-designed space to foster interaction with clients. Preis recently moved the studio around the corner to a more visible North Wells address. You won't find racks and walls littered with hundreds of samples. Instead, you encounter custom-made display fixtures, areas with mock-ups, weathered work tables, and maintenance shop tool cabinets, giving the space an authentic, handcrafted feeling.

This pared-down setup necessitates more engagement, and the custom fixtures are designed to facilitate that process. Designed in-house by Preis and business associate Lucy Minturn, sliding high-density storage racks—like those used for art collections—neatly house tiles from some of the top American artisans. Across from these, a mock-up fireplace and mantel using Motawi Tileworks is lit by four vintage ceramic filament bulb fixtures from an old Woolworth's.

The work really happens in the back of the showroom. Multiple baking racks holding magnetized tile samples are parked next to sliding metal panels, a sharp and functional way for designers and clients to visualize the offerings.

**RYAN LAFOLLETTE**



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## PRESERVATIONISTS AND CELEBS FIGHT TO SAVE FAMED SCHOOL



The auditorium prior to close;  
Left: The abandoned school today;  
Below: The school when it was open.

MARSHALL WEINGARDEN

## SCHOOL'S OUT?

Closed in 2005, the old Cass Technical High School in Detroit is hanging around a bit worse for wear, but may soon graduate to the landfill. Next door, a 404,000-square-foot replacement designed by TMP Architecture serves students, and the City of Detroit is saying that its empty neighbor is a safety hazard. The old 831,000-square-foot building was not well secured when students stopped attending, and has been extensively vandalized. A group of preservationists and alumni—including some

very famous ones—are hoping it's not too late to find a developer to save the building before its scheduled June demolition.

In a January 13 interview with NPR, alum Lily Tomlin expressed her sadness about the old Cass Tech's future. "It was a very special school," she said. "You know, it could have been anything—housing or whatever. I don't know why they demolish these places to make a parking lot." Musician Jack White of the White Stripes and The Raconteurs told *The Detroit*

*Free Press*, "If you're not going to recognize its historical importance, then you shouldn't have built a new school, but modernized the existing building." The school boasts other famous graduates like John DeLorean, Ron Carter, Ellen Burstyn, and Diana Ross.

Detroit city planner and preservationist Janese Chapman explained that part of the difficulty in saving the building is that the school board now owns it. This branch of the local government has nearly equal standing with the city, and

is exempt from many designations that might have protected the school from the wrecking ball. In a move to lessen the blow to outraged alumni, Robert Bobb, the Detroit Public Schools emergency financial manager, announced that the demo crew will save, package, and sell bricks and artifacts.

In a series of workshops with Detroit Schools in the few months that remain, Karen Nagher of Preservation Wayne, a local architectural preservation organization, intends to keep shopping for a developer that might buy the building. A buyer for Cass would need to originate an offer, since the school does not advertise a price. In 2005, the city was asking \$3 million, but at this point Nagher thinks the district would take less.

Due to falling enrollment and growing budget problems, in March 2010 the Detroit Public Schools financial manager laid out a plan to close 44 schools in 2010 and

another 13 by 2012. Detroit Public Schools is the largest property owner after the city itself. As of November 2010, 80 schools were for sale.

Detroit has a reputation as a low-rise city of freestanding homes with few options for renters. Cass Tech's eight stories might provide the rare opportunity for an apartment conversion. A precedent has been set at other closed schools, such as the Nellie Leland School, sold to a developer in 1981 and converted into the Leland Lofts, which was listed on the National Register of Historic places in 2002.

SARAH F. COX



PHRENZEE/FICKR



The redesigned Lawrence Avenue will include bike lanes and curb extensions.

Lawrence far more appealing.

Adolfo Hernandez, director of outreach and advocacy at the Active Transportation Alliance, agrees. His organization undertook a walkability study after a string of pedestrian and cyclist injuries, presenting their findings to the city's aldermen, who requested CDOT take on the project.

"We're not minimizing the role of the car," Hernandez said of removing lanes. "We're balancing multiple modes of transportation." Still, Attarian says car travel will be effected. "We're not going to deny it has an impact on traffic, but it brings a better pedestrian environment."

Increased walkability is expected to be an economic boon, as well. According to Hernandez, businesses along walkable streets tend to do better and see higher foot traffic than roads geared solely to the car. "Moves like this can push a place to the tipping point."

Lawrence Avenue's current layout presents undeniable challenges. "Whenever you have a fast-moving, wide road, it's going to act as a barrier," Attarian said. She hopes the improvements will also help connect the corridor with recent streetscape improvements on nearby Lincoln Avenue.

Instead of flash swamps at the corner, curb extensions with bioswales to capture rainwater runoff will narrow the street at crosswalks, along with pedestrian refuges in the central turning lane, that should further increase pedestrian safety.

Including bioswales in the bumpouts actually saves money, Attarian explained. One cost typically overlooked when narrowing a street is relocating catch basins. The swales allow basins to remain in place inside new planters.

East of Ashland, Lawrence currently contains only two travel lanes, but will still undergo a similar slimming treatment. Sidewalks will be extended to accommodate 100 new shade trees and allow for al fresco dining.

The city is now completing the streetscape design for Lawrence Avenue, and the road diet will be realized in two phases over the next several years. Funds are being sought, and the final project is expected to cost between \$14 and \$20 million.

For local advocates, Lawrence Avenue is just the beginning. "We're pretty excited that there seems to be a more balanced approach to road design," Hernandez said. "Lawrence Avenue is a really nice start." Cars have been king of the road for too long, he said: "We're moving in the other direction."

BK

## SLIM FAST continued from front page

Placing oversized streets on a so-called "road diet" has already been tested on at least ten of Chicago's residential streets in recent years, but with the upcoming repaving project on one of the city's busy corridors, the time is right to take the concept mainstream.

A mile-long stretch of Lawrence Avenue

between Western and Ashland avenues with four travel lanes will be cut to three with full bike lanes and wider sidewalks. Janet Attarian, a streetscape project director at CDOT, said a few targeted changes will go a long way toward improving a neighborhood. And providing opportunities for sidewalk dining with new benches, lighting, and 150 new trees should make heavily trafficked



#### KEEPING UP WITH JONES HS *continued from front page*

Commission (PBC) staff in accordance with the established criteria, which included previous experience in providing architect of record services on school construction projects of similar complexity, size, location, budget and type, participation of women and minority owned businesses, quality control plans and quality of proposed staff," wrote Mimi Simon, a public information officer for the PBC, in an email. "Based on the evaluation process, Perkins + Will demonstrated the highest level of qualifications for our criteria."

On December 14, 2010 the design was shown at a community meeting to gather feedback.

According to the PBC's Simon, "We have not yet received any substantive comments on the building design." The architects were not free to speak, citing PBC rules.

Like all new public buildings in Chicago, the new Jones Preparatory will meet at least LEED Silver standards and will include stormwater management systems, automatic and low-flow plumbing fixtures, lighting sensors and daylight harvesting, native and adaptive landscape species, and a green and reflective roof to mitigate the urban heat island effect.

The next step for the project is a hearing at the Zoning Board of Appeals scheduled for February 18. Completion is planned for fall 2013. **AGB**

The rear facade.



COURTESY PERKINS + WILL



GARY WEEK

#### ENVIRONMENTAL GROUP DISPUTES RECYCLING BENEFITS OF COAL ASH

## DUST-UP WITH EPA

A review conducted by independent nonprofit groups Environmental Integrity Project (EIP), Earthjustice, and the Stockholm Environment Institute's U.S. Center at Tufts University asserts that the EPA grossly overestimated the value of coal ash recycling, possibly preventing the passage of tougher regulations for the handling and disposal of fly ash and other coal combustion byproducts.

Prompted by the Tennessee Valley Authority's massive fly ash sludge spill in 2008, the EPA's 2010 announcement of a proposal to designate coal byproducts as hazardous waste caused an industry outcry. Opponents say the move would

#### Samples made with fly ash.

jeopardize several sectors that rely on recycled fly ash, an ingredient often present in building materials like wallboard and concrete. In response, the EPA's regulatory proposal included a second option through which coal byproduct disposal would be regulated by the states.

Now, the EIP and its partners have released a new study. Using the EPA's own empirical data, it finds that the agency's estimate, which suggests that recycling coal combustion residue results in annual life-cycle benefits at almost \$23 billion, is wholly inaccurate. Their analysis suggests an annual benefit of only \$1.15 billion—20 times less. The group said the discrepancy arises from the government's wish to appease industry stakeholders by pushing through weaker regulations, in light of the favorable cost-benefit analysis.

"Unfortunately, EPA and OMB just got this wrong," said Environmental Integrity project director Eric Schaeffer in a release. "The 'regulatory impact analysis' prepared by EPA to support its proposal exaggerates the economic life-cycle value of coal ash recycling, which could end up stacking the deck in favor of the weaker regulatory option favored by industry."

In the report published in late December, analysts said the

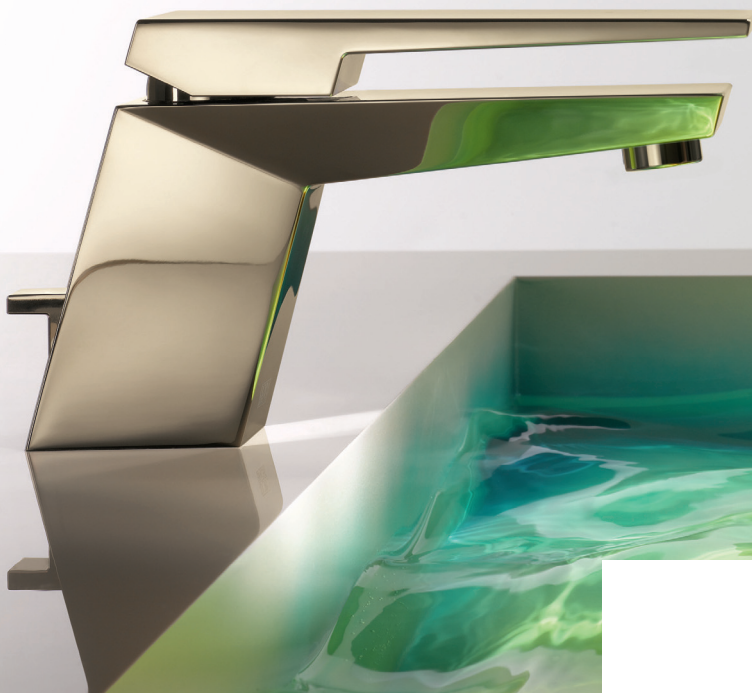
EPA's findings were faulty because they overestimated the amount of fine particle emissions prevented by recycling, and miscalculated the energy savings realized by recycling ash from cement kilns. The report also states that the agency's numbers discount the quantifiable benefits of stricter standards, instead placing a huge dollar value on the stigma accompanying a hazardous waste designation for coal byproducts.

Stakeholders remain divided over whether a hazardous waste designation would help or hurt the industry. Though it is the only way for the EPA to obtain nationwide oversight, many use the current success and efficiency of existing state-mandated recycling programs as an argument against federal involvement.

Environmentalists, though, will see passage of weaker regulations as a win for the coal industry, arguing that another catastrophic sludge spill is imminent without stricter government controls. "It should come as no surprise that requiring safe landfills for coal ash is less costly than allowing ash dumps to contaminate water in hundreds of communities around the country," said Earthjustice staff attorney Abigail Dillen. "What is surprising, in the face of this major public health threat, is that the books are being cooked to accommodate the coal industry."

**JENNIFER K. GORSCHKE**

# SUPERNOVA



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DESIGNERS: HOK CHICAGO



**Clockwise from top:**  
The community meeting room;  
kitchen sink; typical work  
stations; a private office;  
conference room; reception area.

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Located in Chicago's western suburbs, the design of the new offices of Millward Brown, a market research and branding consultant, draws on the iconography of its highway-straddling location. "We wanted to convey a sense of speed and movement, but also a sense of connection to the firm's downtown offices," said Tom Polucci, director of

interior design for HOK Chicago. The design takes elements of car culture and creates abstract allusions to automobiles, roads, and movement through the materials, color palette, and sense of circulation.

Visitors enter the space through a black-walled, rubber-floored elevator lobby with large black pendant lamps overhead.

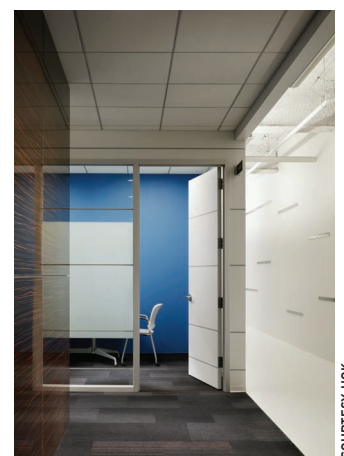
Opposite walls are on one side branded, the other glazed with the reception area visible through glass doors. A custom reception desk with white high-gloss paint, wood finish surfaces, and leather-like trim recalls an auto interior. A small reception area with Bernhardt lounge chairs feels "like a cockpit," according to Polucci. White walls with reflective strips draw down the hallways with white glossy flooring. Inside, open offices with Herman-Miller Ethospace workstations in white and matte metallic finishes line exterior walls to offer the most natural light to the greatest number of employees. The 71,000-square-foot office, which fills one and two-thirds floors, can accommodate over 350 employees. Five conference rooms are clustered around pantries, making entertaining clients or lunchtime presentations easy to carry off. They feature graphic Wolf Gordon wall cover-

ings with a running line pattern. A handful of private offices and 12 small meeting rooms line the core.

Informal gathering spaces are also an important aspect of firm culture. "It's a young staff. It's critical to the way they work," Polucci said. The Community Meeting room, or Town Hall, which overlooks one of the large open office areas, is the most eye-catching of these spaces, with strips of light racing across the ceiling, and pops of color from red Panton chairs. The space also features small Nelson sofas from Herman Miller with Paul Smith striped fabric from Maharam. A carpet tile called Places and Spaces, designed by HOK for Lees Carpets, covers the floor.

HOK has designed other spaces for Millward Brown, and is beginning work on a new project. In each project, the firm repeats functional elements and spatial relationships, but alters the design to suit the culture of

each office and reflect the nature of the site. "They're a fantastic client. They have their ducks in a row. You work with a core group throughout the process, so everyone has a sense of buy-in," Polucci said. "The project really benefited." **AGB**





**NOT SO FAST** continued from front page mid-century decades, among them the iconic “corncob” apartment complex, Marina City (1959); the Raymond Hilliard Homes (1966); and River City (1980-86).

But none have been landmarked. And now, one of the most distinctive, Prentice Women’s Hospital (1975), its bulbular tower vacant since 2007, is in danger of demolition once the psychiatric service offices located in the base of building move out this summer, as planned. Landmarks Illinois has put the hospital for two years running on its Ten Most Endangered Historic Places list.

The women’s hospital, now in the possession of Northwestern University, was once a progressive birthing center, its forward mission reflected in its design, inside and out, with a layout putting nurse stations at the center of a radial plan of wedge-shaped patient rooms. It featured in the 70s the kind of accessible social-networking plan that is now considered essential in a wide variety of medical, research, and institutional buildings.

Structurally, it is just as dynamic. After working ten years on the design, Goldberg, who was one of the first to employ computer-modeling techniques adapted from the aeronautics industry, came up with its elegant shape. A quatrefoil mass in concrete cantilevered from a supportive core and free of interior columns, the tower meets the box-shaped base with a circle of interlocking sliced parabolic arches.

“Goldberg’s finger was on the pulse of a lot of the same things that interest architects today,” said Alison Fisher, an assistant curator of architecture at the Art Institute

of Chicago, where the first retrospective, *Bertrand Goldberg: Architect of Invention*, is in the works and due to open in September. “He was at the forefront of cross-pollination with his interests in engineering, materials research, pre-fabrication, and healthcare. He was trying to push the boundaries of what architects could do.” Fisher also noted that interest in Goldberg is mounting as students and such au courant architects as Jeanne Gang are exploring his works anew. (The AIC holds Goldberg’s archives.)

Whether that renewed interest can save the Prentice Women’s Hospital is unclear. Landmarks Illinois recently launched a website to stir public awareness, and is working on a report, due in March, suggesting adaptive reuses for the building that are both medically-related (research labs, housing for doctors and nurses) and needed in the area (offices). According to James Peters, the group’s president, public support will be critical to rescuing the Prentice. “Response from the architecture community has always been very positive; they know the building is a structural tour de force. The public reaction is more mixed. Some say it looks like a prison. People just love it or hate it,” he said.

With the “Save the Prentice” campaign winning friends on Facebook, and local 42<sup>nd</sup> ward alderman Brendan Reilly, a supporter of modern architecture in the past, lending an ear, hope is cautiously alive that the building can be saved. “One thing is for sure: It’s the most distinctive building in Streeterville,” Peters said. “But once it’s empty, it becomes vulnerable.”

**JULIE V. IOVINE**

AT DEADLINE

## GETTING ON TRACKS

What’s Red and Purple and bruised all over? The Red and Purple lines north of Belmont are in a state of serious decay, and now the Chicago Transportation Authority has decided, at the very least, to study the situation. The agency has come up with six proposals for addressing the sorry state of the tracks and train stations, though the funding for improvements remains far from concrete. The proposals range from taking no action, to two basic rehabilitation plans, to a few modernization alternatives. All the options come at a cost. No action requires \$280 million, basic rehab comes in at \$2.4 billion to \$2.9 billion, and modernization alternatives would cost from \$4 billion to \$4.2 billion. End results vary, with the basic plans lasting only 20 years and modernization lasting from 60 to 80 years.

## MONEY WHERE IT COUNTS

For Modernist pilgrims worshipping at the altar of Mies’ Chicago Federal Center, the \$155 million recently allocated to the center from the federal stimulus package will make little difference. Behind the curtain wall, however, the money will help to upgrade energy systems within the aging masterpiece and bring it up to par with current standards. Cosmetically speaking, the plaza will also get a facelift, but the thrust of the allocation will go toward trashing obsolete heating and cooling units. Similarly, in Cleveland, another \$121 million will go toward wrapping the General Services Administration building in a huge steel and glass envelope designed by Interactive Design partner Charles Young. The high strength laminate glass will reflect sun away from the original structure while insulating the original building during the colder months, making it one of the largest storm windows in the nation.

## FOUR SQUARE

The parking lot at the corner of Madison and Halsted in Chicago may soon sprout a luxury 514-unit apartment building with a multi-use base. At the moment three buildings anchor a corner of the intersection and the new tower would complete the composition. The fifty-story glass oval, called One South Halsted, was designed by FitzGerald Associates. The cyclical form sits beside a square volume that incorporates 30,000 square feet of retail, 520 parking spaces, banquet halls, a business center and a pool—all to be shared with the 400-room Crown Plaza next door. The total square footage comes to more than 822,000 square feet. The FitzGerald website touts the location next to Interstate 90 as a plus, virtually guaranteeing unobstructed views of downtown.



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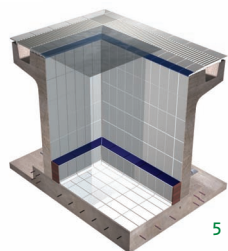
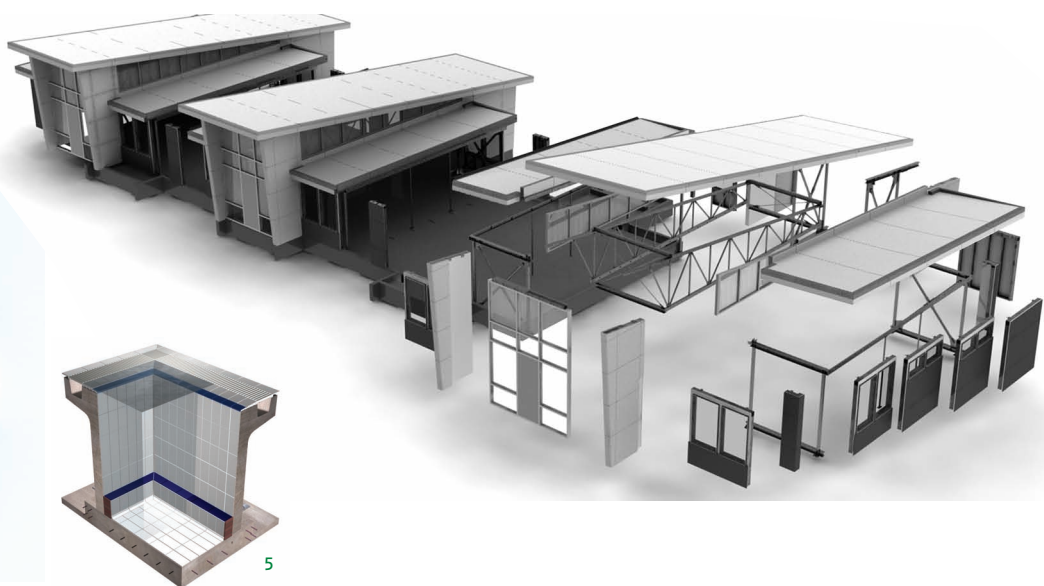
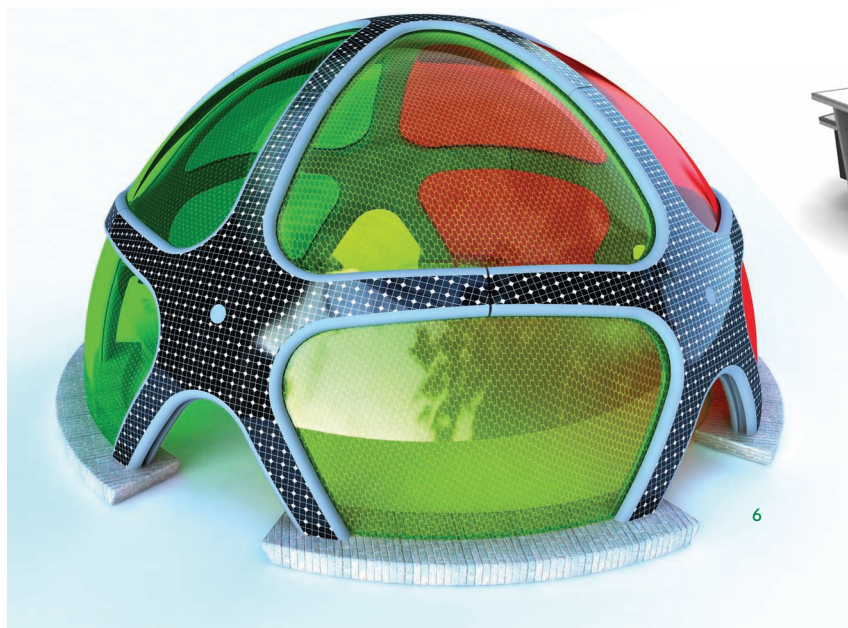
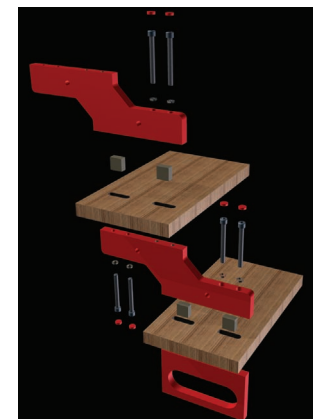
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# A LA MODULAR

NOT JUST FOR HOUSES, PREFAB DESIGNS THINK BEYOND THE BOX  
BY JENNIFER K. GORSCHÉ



## 1 BOX KITCHEN FLETCHER CAMERON

A new product from kitchen design firm Fletcher Cameron, founded by Frank Lloyd Wright's great-granddaughter Christine Ingraham, the Box Kitchen is a prefabricated cabinet solution for kitchens, baths, and offices. Available in standard, legged, or wall-hung cabinet styles in 33 laminate colors and ten wood veneers, the cabinets come standard with soft-close, Euro-style hinges on solid maple or metal drawers. Components are fabricated in Connecticut and can be shipped nationwide. [www.boxkitchen.com](http://www.boxkitchen.com)

## 2 MODULAR STAIR ASCENDINGS

Introduced at the 2010 Build Boston show, Ascendings is a modular stair system consisting of CNC-machined aluminum components that can be prefabricated for a variety of straight and curved stair designs, with wood (produced by the Indiana company's Amish neighbors), metal, lightweight concrete, or glass treads. The system uses a patent-pending technology to replace stringers with individual aluminum pieces, making it ideal for remodel projects in which full-stair installation is difficult. [www.ascendings.com](http://www.ascendings.com)

## 3 SMART BUILDING KITS PROJECT FROG

Founded in 2006, smart-building manufacturer Project Frog is testing its next generation of designs in the Hawaiian Islands; a sample building kit is shown here. Working with the Hawaii Natural Energy Institute, the company will install a series of buildings designed for energy efficiency and sustainability throughout the islands, evaluating a new energy-neutral test platform at two climatically different locations, and testing the structural system and building envelope performance in the two environments. Alternative-energy generation technologies will also be evaluated. [www.projectfrog.com](http://www.projectfrog.com)

## 4 MODULAR HOMES ASUL

An acronym for the Adaptable System for Universal Living, ASUL homes use a material management system to source, prefabricate, and package construction materials for assembly from anywhere in the world, should they be unavailable at the building site. Design options include ten modular sizes, two deck and awning options, and three ceiling-height variations, with raised or slab-on-grade foundations. Homes may be built by the owner or ASUL, alone or collaboratively. [www.asul.us](http://www.asul.us)

## 5 SYSTEM 10 ROSA GRES

A new prefabricated system for constructing concrete overflow swimming pools quickly, the new Rosa Gres System 10 uses interlocking precast panels, with an integrated pool-surround drainage channel, to ensure a precisely finished, high-strength tank structure. Once the pool tank is complete, the system is waterproofed with a Hidroelastic membrane system, and tiled using the company's Ergo System range of porcelain pool tiles. [www.rosagres.com](http://www.rosagres.com)

## 6 ART.RAINBOW GUALENI DESIGN

A new conceptual model from Gualeni Design, ART.rainbow is a prefabricated, solar-powered pavilion composed of transparent composite sheets held together by a dome of modular elements fitted with solar panels. During the daytime, the structure is a light-filled space for gatherings; at night, LEDs within the ceiling use stored solar power to illuminate the interior. The "artificial rainbow" is available in any color scheme and can be customized to suit an event's needs. Production is anticipated. [www.dxtroy.com](http://www.dxtroy.com)



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CONFERENCE KEYNOTE LECTURE

**GREG LYNN**

ARCHITECT, LOS ANGELES/ PROFESSOR, UCLA

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- ☐ 100–249
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COURTESY TWBTA

Nimble development by the University of Chicago and private interests is changing the face of Hyde Park and Woodlawn.

By Ann Lok Lui

# SOUTH SIDE STORY

In early January, the University of Chicago announced that the long-empty Harper Theater and its neighboring office buildings will be ready for a Five Guys burger joint in the fall, along with other retail and commercial tenants. The Harper Theater, acquired by the university in 2003, is just one of many local properties it purchased that is slated to become part of a new commercial corridor along 53<sup>rd</sup> Street.

The adaptive re-use of Harper Theater is an example of the university's plans to develop Hyde Park and expand into neighboring Woodlawn in unprecedented ways. Traditionally, the university has kept its dorms and facilities close to the chest; now, its real-estate purchasing record shows how the university is developing commercial properties in Hyde Park while expanding traditional projects like

residence halls and classrooms to the north-edge of Woodlawn.

"Obviously, the University of Chicago's primary mission is not real estate development," said Steve Kloehn, the associate vice president for news and public affairs. "But it is crucial that we help create and sustain what will attract the very best students and faculty members and staff we can."

The University of Chicago has never had a simple relationship with its neighbors in the hundred years since its founding. Today, university projects in Hyde Park and Woodlawn garner both local criticism and support.

"There's a perception that the university is an 800-pound gorilla coming in and doing things," said Jane Ciacci, the president of the Hyde Park-Kenwood Community Conference, a neighborhood

organization. "It's divided between people who think: 'Yeah, we want development. We need a better grocery store,' and other people who say, 'What they've got is too expensive for us.' So there's a real division between whether gentrifying the neighborhood is a great thing or is ruining it."

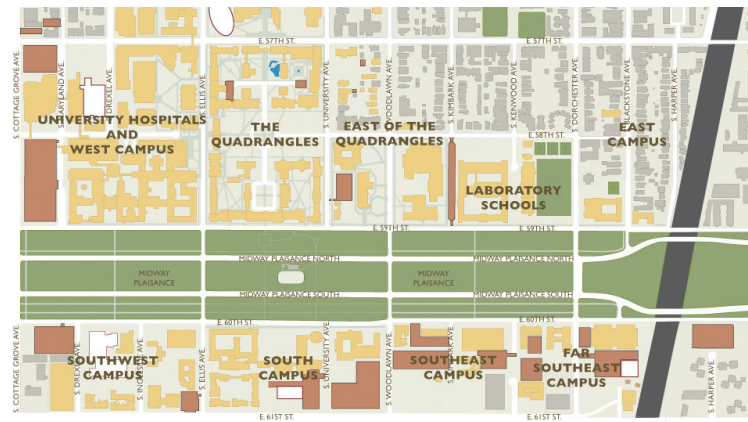
Harper Court, a partnership between the university and the City of Chicago, is a 1.1 million-square-foot commercial hotel and retail facility, anchored by university administrative offices, that will be built in the first phase. The project, by Hartshorne Plunkard Architects, represents what Kloehn calls "a once-in-a-generation opportunity" for commercial growth after other piecemeal efforts failed to develop a retail-based district in Hyde Park. Commercial development by big-name schools like the University of



COURTESY HARTSHORNE PLUNKARD ARCHITECTS



COURTESY JAMES CARPENTER DESIGN ASSOCIATES



COURTESY UC

Pennsylvania has been a recent trend, as many universities look to attract top students and staff. In Hyde Park, however, community leaders have had mixed responses to the university's acquisition of vacant or recently vacated commercial properties in the 53<sup>rd</sup> Street area.

"The neighborhood is always ambivalent about the university," said Jane Comiskey, a member of the 53<sup>rd</sup> Street Tax Increment Financing (TIF) Advisory Council, which is responsible for advising on the use of TIF property tax money in the area where the university intends to develop a commercial corridor. "They do good things, and then they do other things."

In late 2009, the university acquired the site of a Mobil gas station at 53<sup>rd</sup> Street and Kenwood Avenue, three blocks down from

the Harper Court site. The Mobil location marks a mid-point in the 53<sup>rd</sup> Street retail corridor, which developers see as ripe for commercial or residential use. Efforts to build so far, however, have been countered with concerns from local residents about the height of the proposed schemes and the cost of the condominiums.

The university is also using its purchasing power to bring nightlife to the area, acquiring the 5201 South Harper Avenue building where the Checkerboard Jazz Club reopened in 2005, and 53<sup>rd</sup> Street Hollywood Video rental store location in January 2009.

Debate surrounds the latter property as well: According to reporting by *The Chicago Maroon*, the district manager of Hollywood Video claimed that the branch shut down because the university





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**Facing page, far left:** The Tod Williams Billie Tsien-designed Locan Center for the Arts will be a beacon on the Woodlawn side of the Midway.

**Facing page, above right:** Harper Court, a planned mixed use project, will activate Hyde Park.

**Facing page, center right:** The Midway Crossings are meant to connect the campus across the park.

**Facing page, below right:** The university hopes the Midway will function as a new campus green.

**Above left:** The new South Residence Hall, designed by Goody Clancy, has brought a large population of students to Woodlawn.

**Below left:** A new parking garage is wrapped with a thin perimeter office building.

**Above right:** The old Shoreland Hotel in Hyde Park is being renovated into luxury rentals by Studio Gang.



COURTESY STUDIO GANG

purchased the building.

"There's a great concern in the neighborhood: What kind of development will this be?" said Ciacci. "Will there be affordable housing? Will the people who have always lived here still be able to live here?"

According to Kloehn, the commercial development is a product of "visioning workshops" with the neighborhood and university representatives that have gone on for many years. "From our point of view," said Kloehn, "the key will be the mix: We're all in this together, and the 53rd Street corridor should reflect that."

The university has also sold properties in Hyde Park that are now being privately developed, such as the old Shoreland Hotel. Once a fashionable hotel, the university later acquired it for a dorm space, but according to a university

spokesman, it was always too detached from campus. The university eventually sold the building, opting to build new dormitories elsewhere. Studio Gang is now converting the building into some 350 rental apartments for Antheus Capital.

Parallel to the university's move into commercial real estate, the focus for traditional development projects like libraries, dorms, and administrative centers has moved south below the Midway. Standing by a Civil Rights-era agreement with Woodlawn community leaders not to build below 61<sup>st</sup> Street, the University of Chicago is developing the thin strip of land below the park. In the last few years, the university has built south of the Midway, a new residence hall, parking, and office facilities, renovated Eero Saarinen's Law School, and

planned on a new home for the Chicago Theological Seminary. It is in the process of constructing the Logan Center for the Arts by Tod Williams Billie Tsien Architects.

Extending the campus south below the Midway poses a few challenges, however, including questions of safety and the distance of new buildings from the main campus. Two years before the completion of the South Campus Residence Hall, a massive new dorm designed by Goody Clancy, a Senegalese chemistry student was shot on Ellis Avenue near 61<sup>st</sup> Street, prompting concerns about safety in the neighborhood.

"In terms of the relationship to the original quadrangles," said Steve Wiesenthal, the university architect, "the center of gravity is north of the Midway, so the south campus schools are feeling quite

isolated from each other—and from the rest of campus. We have this great challenge. How do we change the perception and the reality of distance to the land on the south end, so that the Midway itself can become this great intersection—the world's largest college green?"

Architects working on the projects south of the Midway have developed different means of addressing the unique site, from a tower at the Logan Center for the Arts symbolizing a signal to the rest of campus, to visually accessible gardens at the residence halls that make the building feel less closed-off from the community.

It is unclear how commercial development in Hyde Park juxtaposed with traditional building in Woodlawn will affect the existing contrast between the already divided north and south sides of the campus.

However, both the Harper Court development, with its adjacent commercial corridor, and the new projects south of the Midway promise to keep redefining the relationship between the University of Chicago and its neighbors.

"We have a very lively debate on campus about architecture," said Wiesenthal. "The way that we've looked at these new projects is less about style and more about guiding design principles, not just spatially, but creating places and spaces where people can interchange ideas."

**ANN LOK LUI'S LAST FEATURE FOR AN EXPLORED PLANS FOR A SMART GRID SYSTEM IN THE LOOP.**



FEBRUARY

**FRIDAY 4**  
**EXHIBITION OPENING**  
**Chad Buck:**  
**Painting Survey, 1998-2010**  
Roy Boyd Gallery  
739 North Wells St., Chicago  
www.royboydgallery.com

**SUNDAY 6**  
**EXHIBITION OPENING**  
**Beauty and Power:**  
**Bronzes from the**  
**Peter Marino Collection**  
Minneapolis Institute of Arts  
2400 3rd Ave. South  
Minneapolis  
www.artsmia.org

**WEDNESDAY 9**  
**EXHIBITION OPENING**  
**The Tragic Muse:**  
**Art and Emotion, 1700-1900**  
Smart Museum of Art,  
University of Chicago  
5550 South Greenwood Ave.  
Chicago  
www.smartmuseum.uchicago.edu

**EVENT**  
**Rethinking Home:**  
**2010 Competition Results**  
6:00 p.m.  
AIA Chicago  
35 East Wacker Dr., Chicago  
www.aiachicago.org

**LECTURES**  
**Louis Sullivan's Banks:**  
**The Jewel Boxes**  
12:15 p.m.  
Chicago Architecture  
Foundation  
224 South Michigan Ave.  
Chicago  
www.caf.architecture.org

**Kansas City Design Week**  
**What is the Value of Design?**  
11:30 a.m.  
AIA Kansas City  
1801 McGee St.  
Kansas City, MO  
www.aiakc.org

**THURSDAY 10**  
**LECTURES**  
**Building on the Past:**  
**How European Architects**  
**Create in Context**  
12:00 p.m.  
AIA Chicago  
35 East Wacker Dr., Chicago  
www.aiachicago.org

**Kansas City Design**  
**Week Universal Design**  
11:30 a.m.  
Leawood Pioneer Library  
4700 Town Center Dr.  
Leawood, KS  
www.aiakc.org

**FRIDAY 11**  
**EVENT**  
**Electromediascope**  
**Winter 2011: InsideOut:**  
**New Performance Videos**  
7:00 p.m.  
The Nelson Atkins Museum  
4525 Oak St., Kansas City, MO  
www.nelson-atkins.org

**SATURDAY 12**  
**EXHIBITION OPENING**  
**Frank Lloyd Wright:**  
**Organic Architecture**  
**for the 21st Century**  
Milwaukee Art Museum  
700 North Art Museum Dr.  
Milwaukee  
www.mam.org

**SUNDAY 13**  
**EXHIBITION OPENING**  
**Nineteenth-Century**  
**Landscape Photographers**  
**in the Americas:**  
**Artists, Journeymen or**  
**Entrepreneurs?**  
The Snite Museum of Art  
University of Notre Dame  
Notre Dame, IN  
www.nd.edu

**EXHIBITION CLOSING**  
**Yves Klein:**  
**With the Void/Full Powers**  
Walker Art Center  
1750 Hennepin Ave.  
Minneapolis  
www.walkerart.org

**LECTURE**  
**A New Look at Spiritual Space**  
3:00 p.m.  
McCormick Tribune  
Campus Center  
Illinois Institute of Technology  
3201 South State St., Chicago  
www.iit.edu

**MONDAY 14**  
**LECTURE**  
**Wendell Burnette**  
6:00 p.m.  
Steinberg Auditorium  
Sam Fox School of Design &  
Visual Arts  
Washington University  
St. Louis  
www.samfoxschool.wustl.edu

**TUESDAY 15**  
**LECTURES**  
**Milwaukee in Focus**  
12:00 p.m.  
AIA Chicago  
35 East Wacker Dr., Chicago  
www.aiachicago.org

**Drew Greenwald**  
**Real Estate Lecture Series**  
6:30 p.m.  
Steinberg Auditorium  
Sam Fox School of  
Design & Visual Arts  
Washington University  
St. Louis  
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**EVENT**  
**Get Connected and Inspired**  
**with Sound Specialists**  
6:30 p.m.  
Sound Specialists  
1661 North Elston Ave.  
Chicago  
www.aiachicago.org

**WEDNESDAY 16**  
**LECTURES**  
**Architect Dominique Jakob**  
**of Jakob + MacFarlane**  
6:30 p.m.  
Fullerton Hall  
Art Institute of Chicago  
111 South Michigan Ave.  
Chicago  
www.artic.edu

**Christophe Cherix**  
6:00 p.m.  
Steinberg Auditorium  
Sam Fox School of  
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**Frank Lloyd Wright's**  
**SC Johnson Research Tower**  
12:15 p.m.  
Lecture Hall Gallery  
224 South Michigan Ave.  
Chicago  
www.caf.architecture.org

**Laurie Anderson**  
7:00 p.m.  
Detroit Institute of the Arts  
5200 Woodward Ave.  
Detroit  
www.dia.org

**Korean Contemporary Artists**  
**from the 386 Generation**  
6:30 p.m.  
The Cleveland Museum of Art  
11150 East Blvd., Cleveland  
www.clevelandart.org

**THURSDAY 17**  
**LECTURES**  
**Design Series:**  
**Chris Ware + Chip Kidd**  
7:00 p.m.  
Indianapolis Museum of Art  
4000 Michigan Rd.  
Indianapolis  
www.imamuseum.org

**Design Exposed:**  
**Halvorson & Partners**  
6:00 p.m.  
Halvorson & Partners  
600 West Chicago Ave.  
Chicago  
www.aiachicago.org

**FRIDAY 18**  
**EVENT**  
**Electromediascope**  
**Winter 2011: InsideOut:**  
**New Performance Videos**  
7:00 p.m.  
The Nelson Atkins  
Museum of Art  
4525 Oak St., Kansas City, MO  
www.nelson-atkins.org

**MONDAY 21**  
**LECTURE**  
**Rick Joy**  
6:00 p.m.  
Steinberg Auditorium  
Sam Fox School of  
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Washington University  
St. Louis  
www.samfoxschool.wustl.edu

**TUESDAY 22**  
**LECTURE**  
**Real Estate Lecture Series:**  
**Bob Sine**  
6:30 p.m.  
Steinberg Auditorium  
Sam Fox School of Design &  
Visual Arts  
Washington University  
St. Louis  
www.samfoxschool.wustl.edu

**Liza Bear: Avalanche:**  
**A Unique Media**  
**Phenomenon and**  
**other projects**  
6:00 p.m.  
Cranbrook Academy of Art  
39221 Woodward Ave.  
Bloomfield Hills, MI  
www.cranbrookart.edu

**EVENT**  
**Spertus Architecture:**  
**Inside and Out**  
2:00 p.m.  
610 South Michigan Ave.  
Chicago  
www.spertus.edu

**WEDNESDAY 23**  
**LECTURES**  
**Howard Van Doren**  
**Shaw's Ragdale House:**  
**Rites of Passage**  
12:15 p.m.  
Lecture Hall Gallery  
224 South Michigan Ave.  
Chicago  
www.caf.architecture.org

**Victoria Vesna**  
6:00 p.m.  
Steinberg Auditorium  
Sam Fox School of Design &  
Visual Arts  
Washington University  
St. Louis  
www.samfoxschool.wustl.edu

**THURSDAY 24**  
**EXHIBITION OPENING**  
**Race & Photography in**  
**African American Imagery**  
5:30 p.m.  
DuSable Museum of African  
American History  
740 East 56th Pl.  
Chicago  
www.dusablemuseum.org

**FRIDAY 25**  
**LECTURE**  
**Dan Immergluck**  
12:00 p.m.  
MARC Conference Center  
600 Broadway  
Kansas City, MO  
www.aiaks.org

**EVENT**  
**Electromediascope**  
**Winter 2011**  
InsideOut:  
New Performance Videos  
7:00 p.m.  
The Nelson Atkins  
Museum of Art  
4525 Oak St.  
Kansas City, MO  
www.nelson-atkins.org

**SATURDAY 26**  
**LECTURE**  
**Of Crayfish & Truffles:**  
**Life & Luxury in Paris,**  
**1720-1770**  
2:00 p.m.  
Detroit Institute of the Arts  
5200 Woodward Ave.  
Detroit  
www.dia.org

**EXHIBITION OPENING**  
**Susan Philipsz:**  
**We Shall Be All**  
Museum of  
Contemporary Art  
220 East Chicago Ave.  
Chicago  
www.mcachicago.org

**MONDAY 28**  
**LECTURE**  
**Cannon Design Lecture:**  
**Rafael Moneo**  
6:00 p.m.  
Steinberg Auditorium  
Sam Fox School of Design &  
Visual Arts  
Washington University  
St. Louis  
www.samfoxschool.wustl.edu

MARCH

**SATURDAY 5**  
**EXHIBITION OPENING**  
**Shot by Warhol**  
Indiana University Art  
Museum  
1133 East 7th St.  
Bloomington, IN  
www.iub.edu

**TUESDAY 8**  
**LECTURE**  
**Update: High Speed Rail,**  
**Transforming the Midwest**  
12:00 p.m.  
AIA Chicago  
35 East Wacker Dr.  
Chicago  
www.aiachicago.org



GUY TILLIM

**AVENUE PATRICE LAMUMBA**  
Museum of Contemporary Photography  
Columbia College  
600 South Michigan Ave., Chicago  
Through March 6

Photographer Guy Tillim captures the fading grandeur of colonial modern architecture in Angola, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Madagascar, and Mozambique. South African-born Tillim trains his eye on the schools, post offices, hotels, and office buildings as they are used—or unused—today, decades after independence. While architecture and infrastructure frame his images, such as the apartment buildings in Beira, Mozambique (above), he is careful to include traces of life, of humanity, in his photographs, avoiding the too-perfect quality of much of architectural photography. He also resists the indulgent fascination with ruins that is equally common in contemporary art. The show takes its name from the many streets across the continent named after the revered but deposed first prime minister of the Democratic Republic of Congo, a figure who has come to symbolize both the hopes and disappointments of post-independence Africa.



COURTESY SPEED ART MUSEUM

**MODERN IN THE MAKING**  
The Speed Art Museum  
2035 South 3rd St., Louisville, KY  
Through March 20

Showcasing recent acquisitions of 20th-century design by the museum, *Modern in the Making* explores how the definition of modern design has changed over time and across national boundaries. The exhibition also demonstrates how, beginning in the 1920s, new materials, especially plastics and aluminum, could instantly signal the modernity of a product or object to the consumer. Designers working in a variety of styles including art deco, Bauhaus, mid-century modern to postmodern are represented, signaling an inclusive definition of modernism, or at least of modernity, on the part of the Speed. Bruno Mathsson's Model 36 Lounge Chair from 1936, Adolf Hegenbarth's glass-and-enamel vase from 1925 (top), Michael Graves's Big Dipper Coffee Pot from 1983, Russel Wright's table from 1935 (above), and Gunter Berlit's Floris Chair from 1963 are among the objects on display.





COURTESY AIC

## MISSED CONNECTIONS

**Hyperlinks: Architecture and Design**  
Art Institute of Chicago  
111 South Michigan Ave.  
Through July 20

*Hyperlinks: Architecture and Design* explores the interconnectedness of various design disciplines, including architecture, industrial design, and multimedia. Curated by Zoe Ryan, the Art Institute of Chicago's first curator of design, and Joe Rosa, the former curatorial chair of architecture and design, the exhibition aims to foster conversations on the changing role of designers as a result of new technologies. Focusing primarily on how the internet has changed our access to culture and to each other, *Hyperlinks* is a lofty undertaking, given the scope of its subject matter. Boasting more than 30 projects in a relatively small space in the Modern Wing's second floor, *Hyperlinks* seems to struggle for cohesion. Cohesion, however, may not be the show's main goal.

*Hyperlinks* does not attempt to collapse the different design disciplines it contains, so much as to mete out some of the layered connections between them. Like clicking on links on a webpage, the exhibit offers several departures in an overarching dialogue on contemporary architecture and design. Looking at one of the chairs in the gallery, for instance, viewers are urged to consider the space the chair occupies and its relationship to the other projects in the room.

A large wall text with slanted graphics at the entrance to the gallery explains how the different disciplines represented in *Hyperlinks* engage and interact with each

other in the Internet Age. Additional wall texts accompany each of the many projects represented in the exhibit. Though they elaborate the relationship between each project, the paragraphs of text take away from the show's effect, seeming instead to invite more attention to the disconnectedness of each piece rather than their inherent correlation. The large, busy wall graphics feel distracting and gimmicky, as the show strives to embellish the curators' vision for the show.

Without all of the unsightly wall words, however, viewers may struggle to make sense of the relationship between projects like Evan Gant and Alex Tee's *Lightlane* and Simon Heijdens' ambient LED installation. While *Lightlane* depicts a product that bikers can use to project their own bike lane onto the street as they ride their bikes, Heijdens' installation uses technology to track wind patterns outside the museum that effectually animates LED panels on an east-facing window in the gallery. Both projects are undoubtedly interesting in form, but their correlation feels trivial, if nonexistent.

Elsewhere, text accompanying Nacho Carbonell's *Lover's Bench* explains how the chair consists of simple materials, including old newspapers, to create a space where two people may have intimacy despite being surrounded by media. Further back in the gallery, *Augmented (hyper) Reality: Domestic Robocop*, a two-minute

film played on a loop, depicts a person interacting with objects in a kitchen in the same way that one drags and drops icons on a computer desktop. Created by architect Keiichi Matsuda, the film suggests a reality where the distance between the virtual and the real is nonexistent. These two projects, like others in the exhibit, seem to complacently accept our inundation with globalization and media, instead of grappling with their heady undercurrents.

On display until July 20, *Hyperlinks* looks at the future of architecture and design as marked by the collaborative efforts of designers in a spectrum of disciplines. Despite the exhibit's approach, its projects still feel isolated from one another. Though the curators seem interested in a statement about how one form of design informs others, each discipline is still categorically apparent.

As refreshing as it is to see the work of international architects and designers address issues of technology and interactivity, the fluidity between these disciplines that *Hyperlinks* aims to express is difficult to grasp without the aid of weighty wall texts. Many of the projects are worth seeing on their own, but the show fails to establish those connections it so loudly, if vaguely, touts. Further, it ignores many of the social and environmental issues one might expect from an exhibit of this kind. *Hyperlinks* does witness, however, the extent to which technology has inserted itself into our daily experience—a question too complex for the show's eclectic projects and utopianism to answer.

**JEREMY STEPHEN SHEDD STUDIES VISUAL CULTURE AT THE SCHOOL OF THE ART INSTITUTE.**

## MINING A MILIEU

*Triumvirate: McKim, Mead & White: Art, Architecture, Scandal, and Class in America's Gilded Age*  
Mosette Broderick  
Knopf, \$40.00

A great biographer of an important cultural producer accomplishes two things: First, he or she explains for the reader the subject's motivations and shows how that person was able to climb to the heights of his or her field; second, the author provides the reader with the feeling that you are there at the making of a work or works of great importance.

In her new firm biography, *Triumvirate: McKim, Mead & White: Art, Architecture, Scandal and Class in America's Gilded Age*, Mosette Broderick, an art historian at New York University, accomplishes just such feats. The book's subtitle piles up the themes to be addressed in this monumental study, and indeed, they are all considered in a comprehensive account of what the author justifiably styles "America's greatest designers from the death of Richardson to World War I."

It has been more than a quarter century since two books on McKim, Mead & White appeared in 1983, one by Leland Roth and another by Richard Guy Wilson. Those pioneering studies were followed by Paul Baker's biography *Stanny: The Gilded Life of Stanford White* (1989), and by a spate of more popular accounts of White's liaison with the chorus girl Evelyn Nesbit, whose husband Harry K. Thaw murdered White. In addition, White's great-grandson, Samuel G. White, has published beautifully illustrated books with Rizzoli that capture the visual richness of the firm's work, and art historian Wayne Craven has written *Stanford White: Decorator in Opulence and Dealer in Antiquities* (2005), which considers the architect's talents with interiors as well as his extensive practice as an antiquities dealer. The acceleration of publishing on McKim, Mead & White has corresponded to the emergence of architectural postmodernism that made the firm's historicism critically palatable after the ascendancy and entrenchment of modernism had made it anathema, and also to the expansion of architectural history's purview beyond its original concerns to include decorating, landscape, and other related fields.

The earlier, sometimes more

pious accounts provide in some cases more thoroughgoing formal analyses of the buildings than does this new biography, and certainly more extensive illustrations, but Broderick has truly accomplished what she sets out to do, namely, provide "a study of the path of the architects." That may sound like a prosaic undertaking, but it isn't. For one thing, such an effort requires the biographer to get inside her subjects' head, to understand what led them to make certain career moves and what formal attitudes inspired the look of their work. For another thing, it requires the author to reconstruct the world around the subjects in great specificity. Both of these things Broderick has done in astonishing detail, while acknowledging that the historical record for two of the partners—McKim and White—is much richer than for Mead, who left little in the way of either a personal or professional record and who, consequently, is less well understood than his peers. Indeed, this is the kind of book that can only be written over the course of years—even decades—by an author who hasn't merely *studied* the material, but *lived* it. Thus Broderick is able to reconstruct the labyrinth of social relations between the architects, their artist collaborators, and patrons. Broderick immerses us in the social set that McKim, Mead, and White navigated in becoming major American tastemakers.

In so doing, she fleshes out the identities of the three partners: White, the socialite charmer whose high living finally does him in; McKim, who finds solace from personal tragedy by fashioning himself the dean of American architecture in his later years; and Mead, the shadowy but level-headed manager of the firm, who held his partners in check. None of the three emerges as anything less than fascinating dinner company, if deeply flawed humans. Clearly, they could not have survived without their assistants, especially Joseph Wells, who comes across as perhaps the firm's most talented designer and whose embrace of historical architecture shaped the direction the firm would take. His death in 1890, Broderick suggests, ended its most creative period of production. Without belaboring the point, Broderick shows that the works of McKim, Mead, & White were not the products of three men, or even of their vast office that helped establish a new form of architectural practice, but of an entire social *milieu*—at once high-minded and scandalous.

**KEVIN D. MURPHY TEACHES ART HISTORY AT CUNY GRADUATE CENTER.**

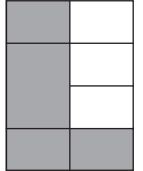


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Plate 87 of Daniel Burnham and Edward Bennett's 1909 Plan of Chicago, as rendered by Jules Guerin.

We have a saying in politics, "If you're not at the table, you're on the menu." This is why, for example, government capital construction programs typically allocate one-tenth as much on buildings, where most people spend 90 percent of their time, as they do on asphalt. Architects are not at the table.

The way to change such things is via another truism, "Politics is a game of addition." You have elected representation: Why shouldn't one of them be you? Identify what issues are important to you and then burrow into the power structure that most directly affects that area of our society. Is it education? Is it the environment? Is it housing? Start at the local level, work from issues where your professional or volunteer efforts give you credibility, build coalitions to support your candidacy, and become part of the "farm system" from which candidates for higher office are usually drawn.

I'm on my second four-year term as an elected trustee of my local township. It's a pretty modest time demand, but it has dramatically enhanced my access and input to my representatives in our state legislature and in Congress. Have you ever contacted yours about their vote on issues that are important to you? Have you ever organized an event for one you support? If you are dissatisfied with one of them, have you ever tried recruiting or supporting someone to replace them, or run yourself? Have you designed a way to be more effective in steering us to a better world?

FDR, meeting with a coalition whose intentions he clearly supported, famously ended the meeting with, "Fine, now go out there and make me do it." Power is never given. It can be earned or developed through relationships of give and take, but sometimes it must simply be taken. For too long, architects have sat on the sidelines and watched as lawyers, doctors, and businesspeople from other industries have stepped up and taken a seat at the table. We need to stop being afraid of it, understand it, and make it part of what we do. As someone who has been involved in dozens of political campaigns, I can tell you: Politics is a design problem. We just need to start seeing it that way.

**ERIC DAVIS IS AN ARCHITECT WITH CDM IN CHICAGO.**

For years, I have watched in frustration as architects have been regularly sidelined by politics. Whether in the context of our desire for changes to public policy, or in pursuit of work for public agencies, as a profession we typically show up for battle completely unprepared. When we do "get involved," it is usually confined to earnest conferences and clientless urban speculations, the political equivalent of howling at the moon.

If instead we remember the example of our successes in the movement of sustainable design and accessibility at turning good ideas into law, we can change how we and our fellow citizens view the proper role of architects in the public arena. We can translate our intentions into meaningful changes. Political action is a part of the job, something critical to our effectiveness whether as professionals or academics. This kind of change requires patience, determination, and the recognition that often, as the saying goes, the perfect is the enemy of the good.

Architecture is an inherently political act. All new construction, even highly context-driven design, is inescapably indexed in relation to, and therefore an explicit comment on, those around it or those of its type. It is also therefore an assertion of the owner's societal status. The modern movement tried to ignore or deny these connotations, but that was both a sham and impossible.

We are the only profession that is trained to see a world that doesn't exist yet, but we are maddeningly unwilling to get involved in establishing the policies that set the parameters for programming and design. Decisions are made by those who show up, but architects have largely been absent from the political decision-making whose implications affect their work most. Compare the verdant parkways of urban Long Island with the expressways of Chicago or LA and realize that the deciding factor in the quality of those environments was political will. For the latter, beauty and the natural environment were just not enough of a priority for the people making the budget decisions—and no one made them see otherwise.

Politics has always been something with which some of the most important and talented architects engaged. Bernini, for example, played papal politics to the hilt; his Four Rivers Fountain in Piazza Navona is well known as part of his lengthy rivalry with Borromini. His skill in that area led to such prestigious commissions as the elliptical colonnades at St. Peter's.

More recently, Thomas Jefferson, America's only architect president (so far), knew and understood the role politics does and should play in relation to architecture. He clearly was making a political argument with the sophisticated urbanism of his University of Virginia, making

it a template for the civil society of the new republic he had helped to create. As Steven Hurtt pointed out in an article in *Threshold*, even the Constitution itself, as a diagram and as a field for political activity, is directly related to the American continental grid. It established the way we were intended to locate and structure our urban centers across the landscape.

Here in Chicago, the "White City" of the World's Columbian Exposition (Wright and Sullivan's aesthetic disdain notwithstanding) required all of Daniel Burnham's political skills to deal with both local elected officials and national architectural politics. Absent this political tenacity, his efforts to use design to show that a better future was possible would have been limited to beautiful, unbuilt watercolors. The architecture and urbanism of the capitals of many states and nations, including our own, would have been significantly different.

Yet when confronted with an RFQ to design a significant public building (perhaps excepting the GSA's Design Excellence projects), many if not most architects shrug their shoulders and say, "Well, that's really just about politics." Indeed, and that is not automatically a bad thing.

Since the days of Andrew Jackson, the spoils system has meant that elected policy makers should and do have the right to decide who executes policy. Since architecture is the most

visible and often the most enduring translation of such policies, this includes designing the buildings for them. It is therefore not only necessary for architects to engage the electoral process; it is proper. If you want to see your body politic move in a particular direction—say, toward even more complete sustainable design—you need to set aside your anxieties and get involved.

So, how? Former Vermont Governor Howard Dean says that in terms of participating in our civil society, just voting earns you a "D." You pass, but only just barely. To make a difference, you need to volunteer to support a candidate with whose positions you agree, you need to help them raise money, and at some point (deep breath) you yourself need to run for office.

I'm chair of the Empowerment/Advocacy Committee of AIA Illinois. As much as we work to advocate to the legislature for bills that support our profession's activities, we recognize that our efforts would be exponentially magnified by having an architect as a member of the legislature. The same is true for your local town, city, or county council, your school board, even your representation in Washington. If architects are going to get the political influence our profession deserves and bring the maximum benefits of good design to our communities, we need to see taking this plunge as part of what we do.



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